

# Start Me Up Niagara

YEAR IN REVIEW  
2022





## **OUR VISION:**

Start Me Up Niagara envisions a community where all people are included, healthy and self-sufficient.

## **OUR MISSION:**

Start Me Up Niagara works with individuals facing significant life challenges. We provide opportunities to improve health, increase community integration and support employment.

# **Our Values**

**We strive to assist our clients to improve their quality of life and to take personal responsibility for their own well-being.**

**We believe individuals have the right to set their own goals and define success.**

**We believe that active, committed partnerships with people who use services, and other community sectors are integral to success.**

**We believe that healthy communities are inclusive and stronger when all have a place and chance to contribute.**

**We are committed to removing service access barriers for those who have multiple complex needs.**

# The Five Pillars of Start Me Up Niagara

How we support our participants.  
Our pillars are the foundation on which we operate.

**Resource Development:**  
Volunteers, Donors, Sponsors,  
Funders, Media, Web, Social  
Media, Events - CNOY, Graphic  
Design, and Communications



**Employment:**  
Work Action Centre –  
Employment, Self-Employment,  
Bike Me Up, and Social Purpose  
Enterprise



**The Centre:**  
Programs, Services, Partners,  
and 1<sup>st</sup> Point of Contact



**Housing/Shelter:**  
Seasonal Shelters, Housing Case  
Management, Phone Support, and  
Niagara's Mobile Closet



**Food:**  
Kitchen, Cooking, Garden,  
Workshops, and From Our  
Garden

# Start Me Up Niagara's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan

Strategic Theme: Inclusive programs and services	
Goal	Objectives – 2022/23
Determine viability of SMUN's programs and services	Undertake housing prevention services review Determine role in food security
Develop individualized processes to move clients towards self-sufficiency	Provide training to staff for efficient program delivery
Develop sustainable social enterprises	Develop a business plan for Bike Me Up Develop a business plan for From Our Garden
Identify partnership opportunities to enhance services for clients	Secure partnerships to support existing programs
Review and evaluate facility usage to ensure alignment with strategic plan	Develop a plan for facilities for SMUN
Strategic Theme: Advocate for a place where everyone is included	
Goal	Objectives – 2022/23
Have strong agency and program specific brand	Develop agency and program specific branding and communication strategy
Participate in strong advocacy at multiple tables	Ensure SMUN sits at community tables that advance our strategic priorities
Strategic Theme: Build a resilient and diverse organization	
Goal	Objectives – 2022/23
Improve data collection systems to align with funder and sector standards	Analyze data collected, how it's collected, what is needed and explore options for integrated data collection systems
Ensure policies and protocols reflect best practices, professionalism and ensure consistent application across agency	Existing policies and protocols are reviewed and standardized Policy gaps are identified
Identify how technology can improve operations	Develop technology plan
Provide on-going staff training and professional development opportunities	Enhance staff evaluation process Identify and implement agencywide PD opportunities
Build a healthy staff culture	Undertake employee satisfaction survey Engage staff and board in updating agency values Implement bi-monthly staff meetings Provide team building activities
Identify opportunities for diversified and sustainable funding	Create an agency development plan
Ensure board is aware of its fiduciary, advocacy, fundraising and governance roles	Undertake board evaluation survey Develop board orientation and professional development program Ensure bylaws align with ONCA

# The Resource Centre

17 Gale Crescent

**\$18,194**

Financial Assistance  
Provided through  
Brushed Aside

**316**

In Person and Phone  
CMHA Sessions

**138,787**

Drop In Visits

The Start Me Up Niagara community is a welcome safe place open to all, 365 days a year. Our staff is always available, and visitors have access to a variety of services, programs, and activities.

The staff at Start Me Up Niagara use their education, training, and lived experiences combined with professional skills and natural aptitude to treat each participant with compassion, dignity, and respect.



# Housing & Shelter

## Prevention

Prevention programs focus on early intervention strategies to engage and collaborate with individuals at imminent risk of experiencing homelessness to maintain housing or obtain new housing.

Services include:

- Engaging new landlords
- Tribunal support and advocacy
- Mediating landlord/tenant issues
- Connection to supports and resources



## Temporary Winter Shelters

Temporary Winter Shelter is a coordinated approach to providing a hot meal and sanctuary to community members who experience poverty and homelessness over the harshest winter months of the year. Shelters will be available from November 1st until April 15th from 7:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m.

## Supportive Transitional Housing

Supportive Transitional Housing programs provide ongoing support and an individualized approach to eliminate barriers to long-term stable housing.

Services include:

- Life skills sessions (tenancy skills, cooking/cleaning)
- Maximising income (income tax, applying for social assistance or OAS/CPP)
- Connection to supports and resources

**153**

Referrals Made

**264**

Individuals Served  
Prevention

**285**

Food Hampers

**179**

Individuals Given Housing  
Search Assistance

**49 STH/13**

Individuals Supported  
STH/ROOMING HOUSE

# Program Highlight: **Emergency Overnight Shelter**

Start Me Up Niagara operates 2 Temporary Winter Shelters over the harshest months of the year, one in St. Catharines and one in Niagara Falls. Overnights are funded by donations, Start Me Up and the Niagara Region.



# Resource Development

## Funding

In Resource Development, we raise all resources that support SMUN's work through donor gifts, financial donations, government funds, foundations and fundraising events. As a non-profit, we couldn't operate without our generous donors and funders.

## Events

Resource Development is responsible for planning and executing all Start Me Up Niagara events, including our biggest event of the year: the Coldest Night of the Year. CNOY is a fun, family-friendly walking fundraiser that raises money for the hungry, homeless and hurting in our community.

Sponsors, walkers and donors help raise much needed funds for Start Me Up Niagara while experiencing a hint of the challenges faced by those dealing the reality of homelessness.



## Communications

Resource Development works to ensure Start Me Up Niagara's voice is being heard. Whether that is through reaching out to funders and donors, managing our social media accounts, website maintenance or any of the other ways we communicate with our community.

## Volunteers

Volunteers are paramount to the success of the operations of Start Me Up Niagara. Without our dedicated team of volunteers, we would not be able to offer the programs and activities participants have come to count on. With hundreds of volunteers every year, SMUN is very thankful for the tremendous amount of help given to us. We accept volunteers in many programs such as Bike Me Up, the Garden, the Resource Drop In Centre, the SMUN Kitchen, and other areas. Our mighty team is always welcoming applicants.

## Program Highlight:

**\$150,000**  
Raised in 2022



**66**  
Teams

**509**  
Walkers

**15**  
Community Sponsors

Coldest Night of the Year is a fun, family-friendly walking fundraiser that raises money for the hungry, homeless and hurting in our community.

Since 2013, Start Me Up Niagara has raised over \$795,000 through Coldest Night of the Year enabling us to buy our location at 17 Gale Crescent, and open our second location at 203 Church Street, and continue to provide vital programs including housing, employment, food and mental health services.





# **Program Highlight:** **Our Volunteers**

Volunteers are paramount to the success of Start Me Up Niagara's operations. Without our dedicated team of volunteers, we would not be able to offer the programs and activities participants have come to count on. With numerous volunteers every year, Start Me Up Niagara is very thankful for the tremendous amount of help given to us. Their time and commitment is truly appreciated.

We accept volunteers in many of our programs including Bike Me Up, Our Community Garden, the Resource Drop In Centre, the Start Me Up Niagara Kitchen and more.

We are always open to accepting new volunteers.

**110**  
**Volunteers**



**11,440**  
**Volunteer hours**



# Employment Services

203 Church Street

START ME UP  
NIAGARA  
WORK ACTION CENTRE

147

Individuals Served

64

Workshops Held

15

Self-employed  
Individuals

97%

Target Jobs Secured

## Employment Services

The Start Me Up Niagara Employment Team provides support and services to individuals looking to find and retain employment. We offer support for employers as well as traditional and self-employment pathways at the Work Action Centre.

We offer a wide range of services and support tailored specifically to meet individual needs and employment goals, both traditional and self-employment pathways. Our services are available to all living with a disability requiring employment services. Our employment team is available to help participants attain and retain employment.

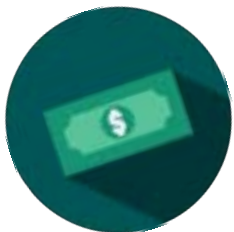


# Program Highlight: Income Matters

**444**  
Individuals Served

Income Matters works with people experiencing poverty, homelessness, unemployment, and rely on income assistance programs for income to improve their financial situation by building skills needed to manage income, budgeting, record keeping necessary to maintain benefits, and by filling annual income tax returns that are necessary for receipt of federal income related programs, i.e. GST rebate.

**561**  
Returns Completed



**\$1,157,714.10**  
In Recovered Income



# **Program Highlight:** **Bike Me Up**

The Bike Me Up program offers a variety of bike-related services. Our group of dedicated volunteers reconditions donated bicycles and offer them for sale at affordable prices. We also provide a safe work space, tools and training for our customers.

Bike Me Up also helps to keep bikes out of the local landfill sites, thus providing an environmental benefit.

## **Who Benefits From the Program?**

Our shop was initiated to serve our local client base, but is also open to everyone in Niagara. Due to our committed volunteers, we are able to offer good bicycles for sale for \$40, making them affordable to people that need transportation.

## **Who Funds the Program?**

Funding is provided through generous individual local donors.

Bike Me Up is located at 203 Church Street (accessible from the side of the building).

**780**

Volunteer Hours

**936**

Individuals Served

**156**

Bikes Sold

**\$7,906**

In Revenue



### From Our Garden:

All our products are locally made by participants in our Garden Makers Program. In this nonprofit social enterprise project, participants learn how to plant, grow, harvest, preserve and use fresh herbs, fruits and vegetables through their engagement in local community gardens and kitchens. Proceeds support the participants and participating nonprofit agencies working on local poverty relief and food security.

### Healthy Kitchen:

At 17 Gale Cres., we operate a kitchen which serves to provide our community with a safe and healthy meal every day of the year, even holidays thanks to our talented team of volunteers. We offer food preparation and kitchen activities for our participants including workshops, cooking lessons, baking lessons, canning lessons, and more.



# Food



# Program Highlight: **Our Community Garden**



**\$2,735.63**  
In Sales "From  
Our Garden"

**5300 lbs**  
Food Harvested

**387**  
Participants

**73**  
Garden and  
Kitchen  
Workshops

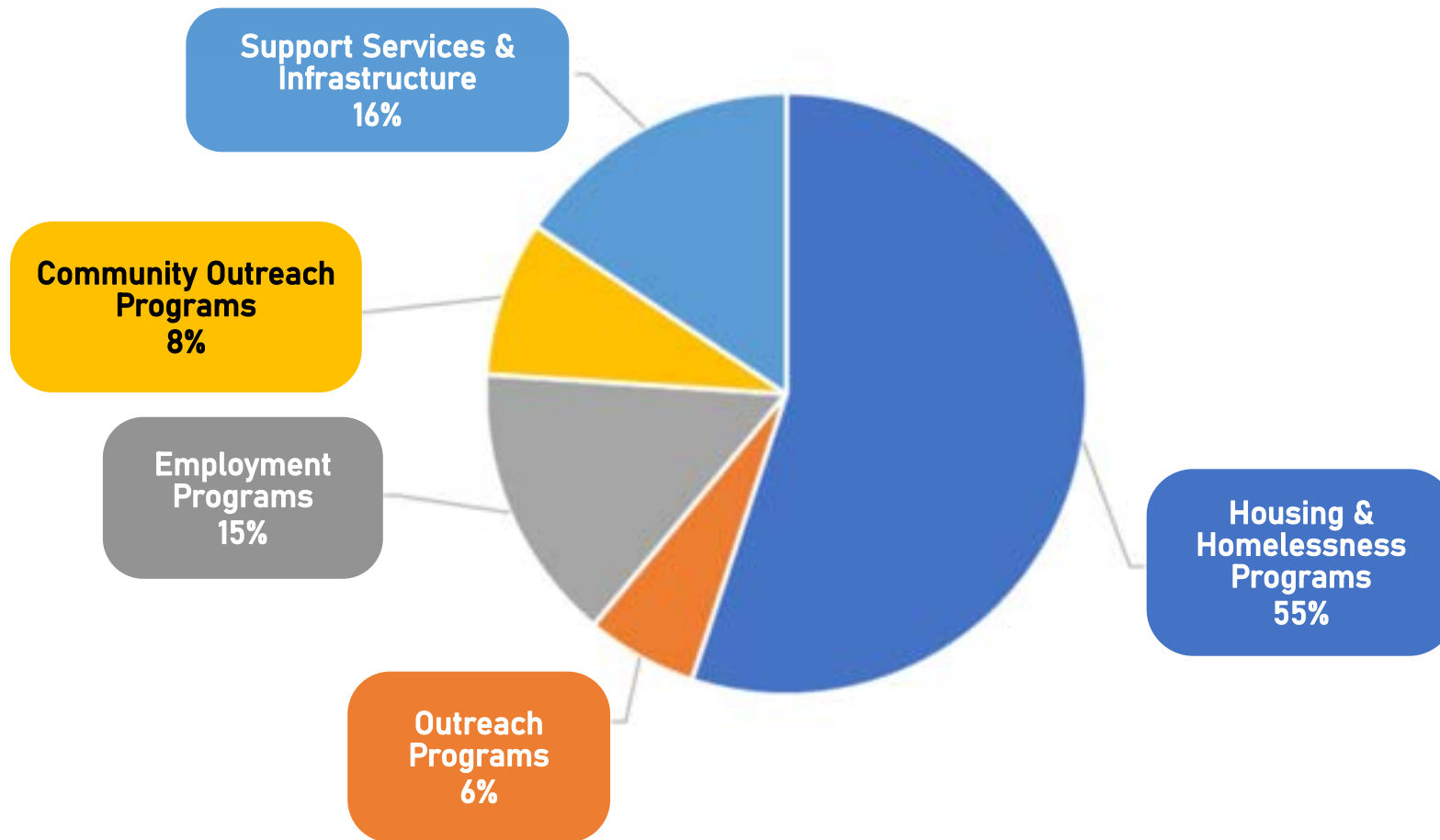
For over 10 years, Start Me Up Niagara has enjoyed the use of a two-acre community farm space at the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre. This space was generously donated to us by the VRIC so we can grow food for our meal programs and to offer to our community at a low cost, helping us to promote wellness and food security in our neighbourhood.

In this space, we grow a wide variety of different vegetables, herbs, and beans. We welcome and transport our SMUN participants out to the farm from downtown St. Catharines, so they can not only help out if they are interested in learning about gardening, but also so they have a place to go to get away from the drama of downtown life. The produce we grow goes towards Start Me Up Niagara's drop in centre, community partners who help feed the community (food kitchens/foodbank), a "pay what you can" pop up market in front of the Work Action Centre, and a small amount of produce is used for our kitchen workshops.





# A Summary of Our Resources





# Canada Ontario Niagara Region



# Our Family



WORKING TOGETHER  
MOVING FORWARD